The Grinch
By Jonathan Olvera

I looked around the walls of my natural enclosure and platform in a place that was called through the passing of time—away from the sun before ours today, in a date far away from the sense of normalcy.

A time of cold, harsh climate and the slight promise of sun. The years were 66,000, and 7,000 was a near perceivable date. It was known as the Ice Age. With long winters.

I lived on Mt. Crumpet—a natural home for people like me, green and with a heart smaller than most. It was a very difficult time for me to understand what was going on, and it could have been the bright green lights in the sky. They seemed to mark a new age—a time where it was winter all the time.

"Arrghhhh!" I yelled.

In the times of nowadays, you would think of heat being normal to feel. But the weather affected the entire earth very differently, and I began to grow green and cold. At Mount Crumpet, where my skin had a natural tone, I was affected by this unnatural event.

I can only describe it as new stars in the skies and a change in climate. I was thinking as men do in any shape—"I need to get out of this light!" I yelled, English being a natural instinct of my own devices.

"Lift!" I lifted rock and stones and began beating at the base of Mt. Crumpet—a name a passerby had left to my inspiration before moving along on the path most known to adventurers.

I could sense it, and it was not known to all—let me tell you, this was the beginning of what was called the Ice Age.

"OOOOH! GOOODNESS!" I yelled.

The moon turned dead white, and snow began to fall. The sun had a shade over the entirety, and my hair turned white. A green star hung above the sky. My hair turned white, and then it began to turn green.

I was frightened! My heart began to shrink. It was so cold, and the biggest parts of it were shooting out of my frozen chest.

My heart was shrinking fast. One time the moon went around, it went around the second, and it went around a third, each pushing the most important and hot parts of my human heart.

I became what is known as a Grinch.

Angry, cold, hungry, and tired from this change. Beating at Mt. Crumpet—there was no shelter to see anywhere but the mountain. It was a desperate attempt at survival.

All the village had departed to take shelter at a place I called "WHO!" and it was a challenge I set for myself to build a home.

I needed to build a home for myself—I needed to survive this cold or be lost in the sub-zero temperatures of December.

"I will take this stone and make it work for me!" said the Grinch—a man with a heart freezing out of his chest and the earth spinning around a sub-zero moon and a sun that lost its light.

"Boom!"

"Plow!"

"Blat!"

I beat at the base of the mountain for so long that I started to make a dent in it—for a cave. There were no tools at the time, or very few, since the village had predicted the event.

"Help me!!!!!" I yelled.

The pine trees around suddenly felt more significant—decorating the incoming winter storm and the harsh weather change. It was maybe ten days where I could not understand how I could survive this cold change and physical transformation.

Flinging more stones and deciding that if an emergency was definite, I would resort to the use of lumber and other items to make a shelter.

"Thooowsh!" I tossed a stone! And "CRACK!" The surface gave way to a cavern within the mountain—a cave was already inside.

"OOOOOOOH!!!" I yelled in victory.

Inside were tens of thousands of seeds, and I thought it perfect. I always dreamed of a thousand seeds to plant in the ground and make my garden. Today was one day to start the beginning of excellent work.

Grumble Grove I would call it—since now I could look at the amazing output of my efforts. I now had a home and plenty of lumber.

"MMMMHMMM!" I grumbled. "Why not name this place GRUMBLE GROVE?" I thought to myself.

I was very satisfied with my work and began to fashion a fireplace and a battery to warm the outside using the most common of all natural resources. Wherever one

may call, I would call them a WHO—and I would observe the differences that were caused by this sudden event.

Snow began to fall, and it fell all the time. The cliff of the mountain was icy and frozen. The star would glow and turn low. I began to wonder if other people had also been affected like me—or even so differently, since this was something I could have avoided by taking shelter with the village.

My heart had shrunk, and the scabs just fell off. I felt empty and lonely. Hairy and green, I went to work at my home on Mt. Crumpet, and I created a garden to separate myself from the WHOS and I planted the seeds.

"What is your name!!" often the village would yell.

"Call me the Grinch!" I did reply—since I was embarrassed by my appearance, and I wanted men to know that it had changed indeed.

The little vines did grow, and they were also varied in shrubs and wild trees. I called them the Glums. Growing and growing, season after season.

"Bum!, Bum,!"

"Boop, Boop!"

I used to sing, although angry with the cold! I could not stop being angry and so green!

"WHO-VILLE Stay Away from me!!!" I yelled in an attempt to save the precious resource and keep it for myself.

It was fun to play games with the WHOS. In my sleep, I had visions of red clothing —probably made from trees and string from pulp and white—and a strange brown drink. I had dreams of sweet smells and bright different colors.

I began to decorate my home according to this fashion: red and white and green.

"Christmas!" I yelled. "Will always be with me!"

It was not until later a woman did approach Mt. Crumpet looking to see who or what could be found.

"Hello!" she called. "My name is Miz SCORN!"

"Ms. Scorn! It is very cold! What is it that you need?"

She replied, "Mr. Grinch, as you know the weather has changed, and I have arrived to see if the resident is still here. We have removed ourselves, and I see you have turned green. Stay here! It is what we could have foreseen. We too have had our differences happen—my ears are now pointy and I work in a new style."

"OH REALLY!" I said. "I thought I was hideous!"

"We will be at the village and I will send Cindy-Lou Who to maintain contact. There is very much to do."

A week passed after Miz Scorn’s visit, but I didn’t forget her words. I stayed watchful. The air was still sharp, and snow still fell endlessly, blanketing everything in silence. Grumble Grove grew thicker with vines and icy blossoms. I found myself tending my garden more carefully than ever.

Then, one evening, I heard it—footsteps, light and uncertain. And a voice, barely above a whisper.

“Hello? Is... is anyone home?”

I stood slowly and peered around the bend in the icy cave mouth. There she was: a little girl, no more than six or seven, bundled in red and pink, her cheeks rosy from the cold. Her bright blue eyes scanned the shadows fearlessly.

“You must be the Grinch,” she said.

I blinked. “You must be freezing.”

She nodded. “A little.”

I gestured for her to come inside. She stepped in, her boots crunching softly on the gravel floor. Her eyes widened at the vines, the carved ornaments, the glowing fungus lanterns hanging from the ceiling.

“It’s... beautiful!” she whispered.

No one had ever said that to me.

I cleared my throat. “You’re Cindy-Lou Who?”

“That’s me,” she smiled. “Miz Scorn said you might be lonely.”

“I was,” I said honestly.

She walked around, inspecting the glowing leaves and carefully hand-chipped decorations. Then she pulled a satchel from her coat and placed it gently on a stone table near my fire.

“I brought something,” she said.

I untied the satchel and looked inside: A wooden cup carved with snowflakes, a small red candle, and a thick cookie made of something warm and spiced.

“From my village,” she said. “I made the cookie myself. We don’t call it Christmas anymore—too many people lost the word. But we still celebrate something we call **Remembrance Day**. To remember who we are, and who we could be.”

I took the candle, lit it in the hearth, and for a moment, we both sat watching the flickering flame.

“Why did you come all this way?” I asked finally.

She shrugged. “You were the only one who stayed behind. That means you were either very brave or very scared. I thought maybe you needed a friend.”

I was quiet. No one had ever said *that* to me either.

Cindy-Lou stayed for a little while, helping me rearrange vines and stack firewood. She asked questions—about the mountain, about the green lights, about my garden of Glums. She wasn’t afraid of my voice or my yellow eyes or my sharp, jagged grin.

“You remind me of my uncle,” she said. “He’s kind of hairy too.”

I laughed. A strange sound. It had been so long since I’d heard it, I almost didn’t recognize it.

That night, after she left, I sat alone by the fire and touched the candle she’d brought. It was still warm. Something was changing—not outside, but *inside* me.

I hadn’t noticed it until that moment, but my heart… it hurt less.

She came again. And again. Day after day, climbing up to Grumble Grove, bearing gifts—scarves, dried berries, paper drawings. We sang strange songs by firelight and watched snowflakes melt on the cave ceiling.

Then one day, she asked, “Why don’t you come visit Whoville?”

I stiffened. “They wouldn’t want me.”

“You don’t know that,” she said. “Besides, Christmas is coming. You should see the lights.”

Christmas.

The word hit me like a wave. I remembered the dream again—the red clothes, the tree, the laughter. The warmth.

Maybe, I thought, just maybe...

On the night before Christmas, I wrapped myself in a fur cloak I'd stitched from bark and bramble. I carried the wooden cup and candle Cindy-Lou had given me and descended Mount Crumpet for the first time in years.

Whoville was unlike anything I'd imagined.

Bright lights hung from every home, flickering like fireflies. Garlands and streamers danced in the wind. The smell of warm spice, pine, and roasted apples filled the air. Children laughed in the streets, and their parents sang soft songs around bonfires.

And they saw me.

They turned.

I braced for screams, for fear, for shouts.

But they didn't run. They didn't scream.

They smiled.

"Hello!" a man called. "You must be the one Cindy-Lou told us about."

"You're welcome here!" said a woman holding a basket of pinecones.

Cindy-Lou rushed forward and took my hand. "This is my friend," she announced. "He's been living up in Grumble Grove. But tonight, he's come home."

For the first time, I felt no need to hide. No urge to growl or snarl. No cold bitterness in my chest.

The Who children danced in circles, and I found myself dancing too—awkwardly, but earnestly. I helped decorate the village square with vines from my garden. I placed the candle Cindy had brought in the center of the main table.

And then it happened.

A sound, small at first, then louder—my heart. Beating. Growing.

I clutched my chest. It didn't hurt. It warmed.

Three times it thumped, and with each beat, the frozen scabs that had encased my heart cracked and fell away. My chest glowed softly with light. A green star rose overhead, bright and shimmering. Not ominous this time—but welcoming.

"Look!" someone shouted. "His heart... it's glowing!"

I stood still, humbled, tears gathering in my eyes.

“Christmas,” I whispered, “isn’t something you decorate. It’s something you share.”

The snow fell gently that night, and I spent it among the Whos—laughing, singing, even sipping from the strange brown drink I once dreamed of: hot cocoa. It tasted like joy.

I returned to Grumble Grove the next morning, but I was no longer alone. The villagers came too—planting seeds, building huts, decorating trees. My little cave had become a sanctuary, not just for me, but for those seeking light in the darkness.

And Cindy-Lou? She visited often. In fact, she helped me write this.

“You should tell your story,” she said. “So no one forgets.”

So I did.

Now, each year, when the green star returns to the sky, the villagers gather in Grumble Grove. They bring candles, cups, cookies, and songs. They call it **The Night the Heart Grew Warm**.

They say it’s about the Grinch.

But I think it’s about something bigger—about forgiveness, survival, and starting again.

I look up at the green light, no longer afraid, and I smile.

And if you listen closely, you might still hear me singing:

> *“Boom, boom! Boop, boop!*
> *Christmas came through a frozen loop!*
> *Hearts can grow, and vines can too,*
> *When someone believes in you.”

And so the seasons passed, and though winter lingered like a shadow cast by the ancient stars, the Grinch labored on—planting, tending, shaping Grumble Grove into a haven of his own making. The vines, once glums, bloomed bright in hues unknown to nature, wild and free. And though his heart remained cold at times, he learned to wrap warmth around it with the things he made: firelight, stories, and quiet laughter when he watched the WHOs from afar.

Cindy-Lou Who came often, just as Ms. Scorn had promised. She brought him tales of the changing world below the mountain, of inventions and new colors, of songs carried on wind-horns and bread made with berries and snow-sugar. And though he never stepped fully into Whoville again, the Grinch listened. He crafted gifts

from wood and stone and left them hidden where the children might find them, never asking for thanks.

One day, as the auroras danced higher than ever before, Cindy-Lou placed her hand over the Grinch’s chest.

“It’s beating,” she said softly.

He looked down, surprised. Where once there had been only frost and silence, now a warmth stirred. Faint, stubborn. Not large, but not gone.

“It’s not the size of your heart that matters,” she said, “but the courage it takes to let it grow again.”

The Grinch stood at the edge of Mt. Crumpet, staring down at Whoville, cloaked in snow, wreathed in evergreen garlands. A smile cracked through his green cheeks. It hurt. It healed.

“Maybe one day,” he whispered, “I'll come down and dance.”

Until then, he returned to his garden, to the stars, to the fire. Not to hide, but to become. A legend not of bitterness—but of winter’s bloom.

And so the Grinch remained, not alone, but remembered. Not cold, but kind. A guardian of Grumble Grove. A soul of snow and evergreen.